Role of Psychologists and Psychological theories in Mental wellness of pupils in the context of National Education Policy-2020

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Abstract

In view of increasing cases of mental health disorders among students especially the young ones, there is a need to incorporate psychological support into the education systems. This need is recognized by the National Education Policy 2020 through adoption of student centered education that includes the social, emotional, and psychological aspects of the student. This paper seeks to understand psychologists or theories of psychology that would support the enhancement of students' mental wellness under NEP 2020. Further, we explore the different theories of psychology including cognitive behaviorism, humanism, and social-cultural that help in identifying the students' psychological needs. Understanding of these theories assists educators to design a positive emotionally supportive climate conductive to the growth of emotional security, social skills, and intellectual abilities. Drawing from the literature in psychology, we present a discussion into integration of psychological principles in curriculum development, instruction and students' evaluation. It also looks at some of the threats that may inhibit organizational setups within the education sector from implementing mental health service delivery and ways of increasing successful implementation. The study implies that, for the realization of the NEP 2020 goals of a balanced education system with regards to mental wellness of the learners, collective efforts of educators, psychologists, parents and policy makers should be encouraged.

Keywords— Education system, mental wellness, National education policy 2020, Psychologists, Psychological theories.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mental Wellness

Mental wellness is the client's capacity to handle stress, work, interact with other people and handle their lives effectively. It embraces the feeling part of life, and psychological and social aspects of life, including thinking and feeling dimensions. Optimal positive mental health enables a person to deal with stress, form and sustain healthy interpersonal relationships and be productive in the society. Being labeled as AMHS it extends beyond the mere absence of mental disorder but also encompasses such aspects of positive mental health as self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and effective coping mechanisms.

Concerning students' mental health, India is not very different from other countries, and more and more students experience stress, anxiety, and pressure. A high-stake competitive education system with significant focus on academic performance also has the effect of putting a lot of pressure on learners from childhood. This pressure is further complemented by parental and social push, and a society in which a

students' value is defined by his/her academic achievements. Anxiety, depression, and burnout are some of the growing health issues that are nowhere close to a solution since the issues predominantly go unnoticed due to inadequate knowledge and the shameful part of talking about health issues. Although few schools and universities formally pay attention to the cultivation of mental health by offering counseling and psychological services as well as mental health education, these activities remain sporadic and confined to large and medium-sized cities only. To date, many institutions do not have staff professionals to offer services for students' emotional support. Moreover, due to COVID-19, the students are getting more stressed and lonely in their homes as schools have shifted to online classes. Although there is an increasing consciousness about the issue, there is an extended demand to establish integrated mental health care schemes in the educational institutions of India to ensure that students who struggle academically or otherwise do not have to do so at the cost of their mental health.

B. Education system in India regarding mental wellness of pupil

The education system in India in the recent past has become conscious about metal health of students but the problem is not yet fully solved. In the past, students have been forced to focus more on their academic performance as well as competing with their counterparts, without much emphasis being laid on the students' emotional health which has lead to increased stress levels among them. This is clearly seen most probably in key tests such as board tests that the students undertake, which most of the time tend to elicit a lot of pressure. The education system for the last few years, though, has gone through a radical change with a more integrative approach toward education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has highlighted the requirement of counselors and other professionals who could work for students' mental health and also the well-being of the students, in addition to the curriculum. Theoretically support from the schools can be enhanced by mainstreaming life skills, Counseling and stress management in the academic institutions. Thus, even now the mental health facilities within India's schools remain underdeveloped. The majority of schools have shortage of qualified personnel who can provide counseling services, and the main concerns here have low profile and are not verbally addressed. However, there are still many efforts needed to include mental wellness into

the educational process as a reliable factor that may deliver the students from the increasing pressures of the modern educational experience.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the mental state of the pupils in India.
2. To study the role of psychologist in mental wellness of the pupils.
3. To study the psychological theories adopted in National Education Policy 2020 for mental wellness of the pupils.
4. To study the provisions made for mental wellness in context of National Education Policy 2020.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the mental state of pupils in India?
2. What is the role of psychologist in mental wellness of the pupils?
3. What psychological theories adopted in National Education Policy 2020 for mental wellness of the pupils?
4. What provisions are made for mental wellness of pupils in context of National Education Policy 2020?

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research is fundamentally empirical in nature, utilizing secondary sources of data. A diverse array of published materials, including academic texts, various journals, governmental reports, policy documents, and educational psychology and mental health periodicals, has provided the relevant information collected for this work. The collected secondary data is then reviewed systematically to assess the applicability of theoretical constructs such as positive psychology NEP 2020 and cognitive behavioral theory to the wellbeing of students. This detailed review, in fact, establishes the beginning point for evaluating how psychological practices impact the Indian education paradigms.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 What is the mental state of pupils in India?

The wellbeing of students in India has emerged as an important issue in recent years owing to various factors such as increased rate of change in society, academic stress and influences of the COVID-19 pandemic among others. Despite conducting an analysis of different research papers, the following themes emerge as some of the most important ones

concerning the Indian students' mental health: The studies continue to report elevated levels of stress, anxiety and depression among the students which have been attributed to academic pressure, societal pressure and competitive examinations (Jaisoorya et al. , 2021; Singh & Sharma 2022). According to Singh et al. , 2023 academic performance is a major source of pressure among the pupils, and this has the potential of causing mental health problems such as burn out and anxiety. For instance, Verma (2020) established that over 60% of the students felt high stress and its effects on their mental health were due to their academic load.

This has been exacerbated by the pandemic that has worsened mental health conditions. Some of the issues that could be observed included student fatigue in learning in front of the computer, lack of interactions with peers as well students feeling isolated and therefore developed depressive and anxious disorders (Suresh et al. , 2022). Banerjee and Meena (2021) reported that students especially from rural areas were more vulnerable to anxiety and stress during this period because they lacked adequate access to the digital platforms and resources during this period. Socio-psychological factors that also came out as major causes of poor mental health among the students include bullying, peer pressure and social media usage. The study conducted by Das et al. (2022) analysis found out that within one week 30% of students were bullied in some way that made them more socially anxious and less self-assured. Furthermore, excessive use of social media has also been linked with increased cases of depression, and sleep problems (Kaur et al. , 2021). The other critical problem is the low awareness of students' mental health since this is a taboo in most societies, and anyone who has mental health issues will not get the support they need from the society (Sharma et al. , 2022). People are afraid to discuss any issues related to mental health but even if they were willing to do so, there are no available professional services of psychology in schools which worsen the situation. According to Raj and Jain (2023), 70% of students stated that they did not like talking to teachers or counselors about mental health problems because of the society's prejudice. Other disparities with regards to students' mental health included; Another major finding revealed that female students were more anxious and depressed than male students (Kumar & Bhagat, 2023). This is most probably due to the fact that girls experience more pressure on various issues such as safety, expectations and roles that are societal in nature, which compromise their mental health.

5.2 What is the role of psychologist in mental wellness of the pupils?

Psychologists have a significant task of enhancing the mental health of pupils and this is important at a time when pupils are faced with challenges of increased academic pressures, social challenges as well as personal development challenges. The analysis of recent articles showed that school psychologists have a complex activity in promoting students' mental health through focusing on one, many, or all of the necessary tasks, including individual and group counseling, prevention, and climate promotion. According to the roles and responsibilities of a psychologist discussed in this course, one of the main roles is to do a psychometric assessment of students with mental disorders, learning disabilities, or emotional problems (Singh & Arora, 2022). If the condition is identified early, then the psychologist is able to refer the child to particular counselling, therapy, or learning facilitations that will prevent long term harmful effects as per the child like academic failure or excessive stress (Mehta & Verma, 2023). They also work together with the students for personal counseling so as to treat some of the psychological problems which include anxiety, depression as well as social problems. According to Sharma et al. (2022), the students who received individual therapy or counseling from the school psychologists showed better skills and strength. As such, this type of support is essential in helping the students take charge of their mental health and well-being, as well as academic difficulties faced. Besides the individual practice, psychologists take an active part in the organization of school-based activities and lessons. These programs may involve using cognitive and behavioral skills to address problems and reduce the tolerance of mental health disorders, which usually are exercising on management of stress, anger, and other feelings that may lead to worsen state of a person's mental condition (Rao & Gupta, 2022). For instance, Desai and Kumar (2021) present how mindfulness programs implemented by school psychologists improve students' stress and anxiety levels and the overall school climate. Another critical requirement of the job description of psychologists is to mediate for students, educators, and parents in the best and supportive support structure creation (Patel & Nair, 2023).

Psychologist gives advice to teachers on how to identify symptoms of pupils' possible emotional problems and how to act in a teacher capacity in terms of maintaining supportive environment. Also, they engage the parents

in order to ensure that the child with mental health needs receives the necessary support in home setting. It improves the efficiency of mental health treatments that are being offered and fosters a favorable climate for the learners. Clinical psychologists also play a part in the formulation of polices in schools in order to promote mental health. Several recent articles stress the importance of schools to incorporate developmental mental health promoting interventions; besides, child psychologists often coordinate such efforts (Banerjee & Singh, 2022). They fight for policies that would make these resources available, lessen the stress that students have to undergo during exams and include mental health in the syllabi. In addition, psychologists are actively engaged in the crisis intervention to students who experience such things as bullying, family issues, or loss (Reddy et al. , 2023). They also give the students an immediate psychological intervention; they assist students to manage their feelings; and most importantly, they make sure that school is always a safe haven for the students, emotionally. It is even more important in averting long term psychological effects of untreated trauma in patients. Finally, school psychologists are particularly crucial in efforts to de-stigmatization of mental health problems. As Raj and Deshmukh stated the psychologists in fact try to reduce stigma in schools by encouraging people to talk about their mental health (Raj & Deshmukh, 2023). This endeavour helps students to go for help without stigmatism hence boosting student's mental health tremendously.

5.3 What psychological theories adopted in National Education Policy 2020 for mental wellness of the pupils?

According to the National Education Policy 2020, a range of psychological principles supports the well-being of students, with the ultimate goal of creating a complete, student-centered method to education. The policy, although it does not point to specific psychological theories, relies on a number of foundational models to coordinate its measures for mental well-being. Analysis of diverse research papers shows that NEP 2020 stresses principles from Cognitive behavioral Theory (CBT), Humanistic Psychology, Developmental Psychology, and Positive Psychology.

A. CBT stands for Cognitive Behavioral Theory.

Consistent with CBT principles, the NEP intends to raise critical thinking capabilities and emotional management in the learning of students. Methodologies in cognitive behavioral therapy bring attention to the correlation that exists among thoughts, feelings, and behavior, and the NEP Emphasizes that equipping students with problem-solving and emotion management skills plays an important role in their mental health (Verma, 2020). The focus of the policy is to recommend CBT strategies that assist schools in alleviating the stress and anxiety of their pupils by growing resilience and self-awareness.

B. Humanistic Psychology

The emphasis on holistic development in the NEP 2020 derives from the principles of Humanistic Psychology, as represented by the works of both Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. This theory interprets self-actualization as well as the improvement of self-concept and the gratification of personal potential as important. The purpose of NEP 2020 is to establish learning environments centered on each learner needs, which cultivates intrinsic motivation, empathy, and personal transformation (Mehrotra & Singh, 2021). The Humanistic method clearly shows that 'experiential learning' and supplying socio-emotional assistance promote emotional health.

C. Developmental Psychology

The contributions of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky from developmental psychology provide important clues for the policy in addressing the ranges of cognitive, social, and emotional development that students display. Chakrabarti and Menon (2020) argue that children's mental health at every development stage is reliant on age-appropriate pedagogies and environmental support as per NEP 2020. According to the policy, teachers should be alert to student differences in development and must use teaching approaches that support mental and emotional growth.

D. Positive Psychology

The NEP 2020 embeds principles of Positive Psychology, which concentrates on inspiring well-being, happiness, and resilience, instead of just reacting to mental health challenges once they come up. The policy supports the advancement of skills, such as gratitude, optimism, and mindfulness, for students to develop a desirable cultural environment that actively fosters mental health (Prakash & Verma, 2021). An educational concentration on holistic learning strives to encourage well-being through the improvement of positive relationships, the cultivation of a growth mindset, and the growth of emotional intelligence.

5.4 What provisions are made for mental wellness of pupils in context of National Education Policy 2020?

It is important to have more focused and efficient mental health interventions for the students as highlighted by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India by including mental health support as an essential aspect of education. The policy supports setting up of wellness centers, and call for training of counselors and psychologist to attend to the growing soft health needs of students. The current studies have asserted how the NEP 2020 stresses on social, emotional and psychological aspects of care in school systems. As per Singh and Chatterjee (2021) it is further important to highlight that the NEP focuses on life skills, emotional health of the child, and Integrated education, which lays down the awareness about mental health among the students. This is where it suggests that all teachers training must incorporate a module that will help educators to identify students who are in distress and how to handle them.

In addition, as presented by Kumar and Patel (2022), according to the NEP 2020, flexibility in education and load on children need to be lessened as it puts pressure on children that leads to anxiety and depression among students. One policy extends the participation of students in co-curricular activities, games, and artistic performances in an effort to improve on their psychosocial health. Further, the NEP also supports routine mental health check-up in school in order to early identification and referral of suspected mental illness. However, the policy also seeks to break the stigma of mental health through the culture of speaking out on the issues in schools. Rao and Mehta (2021) note that in the new policy, mental health is incorporated into the very fabric of education as an integrated idea which combines the two major ideas that form the basis of the NEP. In general, the NEP 2020 lays down the guideline in support of an education ecosystem with a focus on the students' mental health alongside knowledge acquisition. The NEP 2020 lays huge stress on the emotional wellbeing of pupils and this is because an individual's psychological state is crucial for the growth and development of a holistic aspect of the person in question. Several key provisions are designed to support students' mental health within the school environment:

1. Counseling and Psychological Support: The NEP 2020 also envisages that qualified personnel such as counselor, and other trained personnel in human psychology should be employed in schools for support. These professionals are required to engage with students and their mental and emotional wellbeing, to provide one on one and group counseling, as well as building the students' psychological armor.

2. Reducing Academic Pressure: Some goals of the Indonesian political education system in NEP 2020 include shifting away from the high academic pressure which is deemed as unnecessarily detrimental and establishing diverse and inter-connected structure of education. It means that it helps in the reduction of exhaustive and exam-oriented focus during preparations hence causing anxiety, depression, and burnout among the learners.

3. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): SEL strategy is included in the policy to promote students' social-emotional development, improve their emotional skills, and is applied to foster problem-solving skills. SEL also promotes different skills and behaviors including dealing with others, handling emotions and making effective choices that are essential in the promotion of mental health.

4. Teacher Training and Sensitization: Teachers are viewed as the main drivers of mental health in the society. Mental health learning is therefore included in the NEP 2020 to propose that teacher training programmes should carry content that would allow teachers to identify signs for students struggling with mental health issues. Teacher training also involves provision of class conditions that enhance health of students.

5. Mental Health Awareness Campaigns: The policy also recommends schools to hold annual awareness activities for mental health with a view of eliminating its stigmatization. These campaigns target the students, teachers, and parents in order to encourage the use of words when dealing with emotions without the usual stigma of having to go seek for help.

6. Inclusion of Co-Curricular Activities: Understandably due to the necessity of providing an activity for children's emotional and creative stimulation NEP 2020 stimulates an inclusion of sports, arts, and co-curricular activities into school system. These activities are believed to promote mental health as they provide the students with outlets that help them relieve stress and/ or Choir.

7. Mental Health Screenings: The policy recommends periodic mental health check-ups for troubled children in schools to be attended to. This element is decisive when it comes to attaining mental health problems in the early stage and receiving the necessary helps.

In essence, NEP 2020 aims to create an educational environment that nurtures both the intellectual and emotional growth of students, ensuring that mental wellness is a core component of the overall learning experience.

VI. CONCLUSION

The paper presents a comprehensive model of responding to mental health difficulties. It gives important information regarding simple solutions such as counseling, group exercises, mental health check, and raising awareness among teachers, which helps educators and policy makers in nurturing the psychological welfare of students. In relation to the mental health components of the education system highlighted in the research, the study employs secondary data sources, and therefore, has scanty primary data on the practical application of NEP 2020 in schools. The paper can fail to provide quantitative evidence of psychological interventions in Indian schools, particularly in rural regions where there is little help available. The findings of this study can be useful for policymakers, school heads and teachers who would like to enhance school-based mental health promotion activities. Furthermore, this study will be useful for psychologists who would like to develop school-based mental health programs addressing the NEP 2020 framework. The paper can also be of use for the subsequent academic researches focused on the use of psychological theories in boosting the student's well-being in India in practice.

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